

Specific Community Recommendations

Avery

Fuels Assessment

Areas within the one mile of home sites:

Sections 9, 10, 11, and portions of Sections 15 and 16 that lie south of the St. Joe River are closed canopy, mature or over mature timber with a component of heavy down material and a large amount of timber litter. In portions of section 15 (south of the St. Joe River, adjacent to the town of Avery), particularly on cut-over private lands, the fuel is composed of litter from western red cedar and western



hemlock selective cuts (partial cuts). This area has approximately 50 tons/acre logging slash with an additional 35 ton/ac standing green left on site. This area could be represented by a combination of fuel models 12 and 10 at a 60/40 percentage respectively.

Areas immediate to Avery and the St. Joe River are steep—50-60% slopes. As the slope lessens near ridge tops, commercial logging has provided a patchwork of mature timber broken up with plantations of 12-20 foot tall trees. There are also areas of interspersed

selective harvests where some slash abatement has occurred either by burning, or by natural decomposition, or a combination of both. The mature timber in this area is characterized primarily as fire fuel model 8. Timber plantations in this area are characterized by fire fuel model 5. These plantation areas would provide a good break in the fuels should a large fire occur.

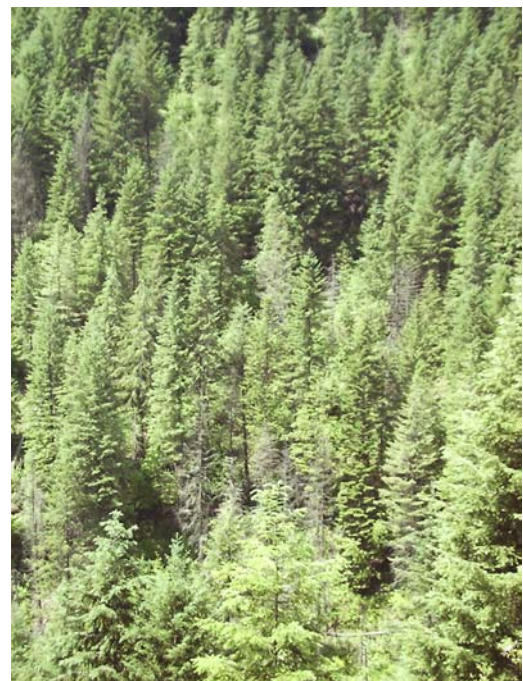


Sections 14, 15, 16, that lie north of the St. Joe River, as well as sections 9, 10 & 11 are a mixture of steep, open shrub and grassy fuels with a great deal of open, rocky areas, especially when close to the St. Joe River or the North Fork. Where timber grows, it is patchy to uniform Douglas-fir with some areas more prone to ponderosa pine transitioning to Douglas-fir. Very little downed material

or timber litter is present. This area is mostly characterized as fuel model 8, but the open areas tend to be characterized more as fire fuel model 4.

Areas within 3 miles of the community center, but outside the one mile home zone:

These areas south of the St. Joe River, are mature to over mature forests with a large down fuel component (slash and debris). They are characterized as fire fuel model 10. However in this zone there are plantations and previous commercial timber sale areas where slash has



been burned that provide small areas of relief in the fuel base should a large fire occur.

In general, on north side of St. Joe river the fuels are younger Douglas-fir stands with little to no timber litter with much area in dense brush fields with little to no timber present. Timbered areas could be characterized as fuel model 10, brush fields as fuel model 5, unless extremely dry then fuel model 4.

Community Risk Assessment

Avery had a population of 420 individuals in the 2000 census. There are about 66 structures in this community, concentrated tightly near the community center. All of these buildings are considered at-risk to loss in the event of a wildfire that threatens this area because of the characteristics of the region which has mature forests, logging debris, and limited access surrounding the community. There is no rural fire department protection for homes in the community of Avery. Wildland fire protection is provided by the US Forest Service–St. Joe National Forest.

The highest concentration of forest fuels near homes have been created in the area immediately adjacent to the community of Avery, on the south side of the St. Joe River. In this locale, logging debris has been generated in a steep forested area where western red cedar, western hemlock, and other species have been logged. Debris on this site is deep, cured, and presents a real fire danger risk. In places, the logging debris is within 100 feet of homes. When combined with the steep slopes of this area, this region becomes a high risk area for wildfire risk.

Two activities should be undertaken in this community to reduce the risk of casualty loss in the event of a fire. First, a community defensible zone should be created that extends from the paved road to approximately 250 feet above the roadway (on the north-facing slope adjacent to the homes), extending from the Kelly Creek road west to Roundhouse Gulch (approximately 5,000 feet long–28.7 acres). Within this protection zone, trees should be thinned, pruned, and shrubs removed, piled, and burned. At the “top” of this fire-break a dirt line should be constructed that would serve to provide a locale where a fire could be stopped. This protection zone is very important to increase the probability

that homes will not be lost in the event of a forest fire on the hill-slope above the community of Avery.

Second, the logging slash in the private land above (south) Avery in section 15, should be treated with fire. This will involve creating a fire line around the entire unit and igniting the logging slash. The timing of the burn should be scheduled for the fall or spring when conditions merit. The combination of treating the fuels on the previously logged site, and creating the community buffer zone will greatly reduce the risk of losing homes in the event of fire in or around the community. After this treatment, Avery will be a much lower risk community in comparison with the other locale in Shoshone County.

